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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION IRAN/SIX-PARTY TALKS - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Thursday morning's Yomiuri gave top play to Okinawa Prefecture's conditional acceptance of the agreement between the GOJ and Nago City on a two-runway Marine heliport at Camp Schwab.

¶1. "Iran's Uranium Enrichment: Tighten the Net" The conservative Sankei editorialized (4/13): "Iran formally announced Tuesday that it had produced enough enriched uranium to generate electricity. Iranian President Ahmadinejad said proudly that Iran has joined the group of countries that possess nuclear technology. This development follows a call from the chairman of the UN Security Council for Iran to suspend all uranium enrichment activities within 30 days.

¶2. "Even though there is an element of diplomatic maneuvering involved, this move is still a challenge to the international community. While taking into careful consideration Iran's proud nationalism, national interests, and security concerns, the global community should join hands to press Iran to halt its nuclear activities, imposing economic sanctions if needed."

¶3. "Six-Party Talks: Cold Wind Blowing on North Korea" An editorial in the liberal Asahi commented (4/13): "...The six-party talks in Beijing on North Korea's nuclear development have been suspended since last November. Hoping to find a way to resume the talks, there were various contacts among representatives of the parties who were in Tokyo to attend an academic conference on regional security. Although diplomats conducted bilateral and multilateral dialogues, there was no direct communication between the US and North Korea, the key to resuming the talks....

14. "North Korea continues to insist that it will not return to the six-party talks until the US ends what Pyongyang is calling 'financial sanctions.'... North Korean chief delegate Kim, who had expressed a willingness to meet with the US, must have been perplexed by Washington's hardened position.... North Korea should be aware that the longer it puts off a decision to return to the talks, the greater the pressure will become, which will only hurt it. The US, for its part, should become more positive about talking directly with North Korea at the six-party talks or elsewhere. Even if the confusion in Iraq or the Iranian nuclear crisis deepen, the North Korean crisis is not going away."

SCHIEFFER